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UTILITY
PATENT APPLICATION
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Attorney Docket No. ACC3 (6544.107870)

First Inventor EVEN, Roni

Title A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ONE OR MORE MULTIPONT
CONTROL UNITS AS ONE MULTIPONT CONTROL UNIT

Express Mail Label No. EL704895768US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO:

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 202311. ☒ Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)2. ☒ Applicant claims small entity status.
See 37 CFR 1.27.3. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 33]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)

- Descriptive title of the invention
- Cross References to Related Applications
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
- Reference to sequence listing, a table, or a computer program listing appendix
- Background of the Invention
- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure

4. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 7]

5. Oath or Declaration [Total Sheets 3]

- a. ☒ Newly executed (original or copy)
Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for a continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
- b. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s)
named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R.
1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

6. ☐ Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.767. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R in duplicate, large table or
Computer Program (Appendix)8. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)

- a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
- b. Specification Sequence Listing on:
i. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R (2 copies); or
ii. ☐ paper
- c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

9. ☒ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
10. ☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement ☒ Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignment)
11. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
12. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
13. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
14. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)
16. ☐ Other:

17 If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment, or in an Application Data Sheet under 37 CFR 1.76:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No. /
Prior application information: Examiner Group / Art Unit: /

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 5b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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**FEE TRANSMITTAL
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TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$) 727.00**Complete if Known**

Application Number	
Filing Date	November 8, 2000
First Named Inventor	Roni Even
Examiner Name	
Group Art Unit	
Attorney Docket No.	ACC3 (6544.107870)

METHOD OF PAYMENT

1. ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any over payments to:

Deposit Account Number: 20-1507

Deposit Account Name: TROUTMAN SANDERS LLP

☒ Charge Any Additional Fee Required Under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17

☒ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

2. ☒ **Payment Enclosed:**
☒ Check ☐ Credit card ☐ Money Order

FEE CALCULATION

1. BASIC FILING FEE				
Large Entity Fee Code (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid	
101 710 201 355		Utility filing fee	355.00	
106 320 206 180		Design filing fee		
107 490 207 245		Plant filing fee		
108 710 208 355		Reissue filing fee		
114 150 214 75		Provisional filing fee		
SUBTOTAL (1) (\$)			355.00	


2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES						
	Extra Claims			Fee from below		Fee Paid
Total Claims	48	- 20** = 28	X	\$9	=	\$252
Independent Claims	5	- 3** = 2	X	\$40	=	\$80
Multiple Dependent					=	

Large Entity Fee Code (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code (\$)	Entity Fee Code (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
103 18 203 9			Claims in excess of 20	
102 80 202 40			Independent claims in excess of 3	
104 270 204 135			Multiple dependent claim, if not paid	
109 80 209 40			** Reissue independent claims over original patent	
110 18 210 9			** Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent	
SUBTOTAL (2) (\$)			332.00	

FEE CALCULATION (continued)

Large Entity Fee Code (\$)	Small Entity Fee Code (\$)	Entity Fee Code (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
105 130 205 65			Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	
127 50 227 25			Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	
139 130 139 130			Non-English specification	
147 2,520 147 2,520			For filing a request for ex parte reexamination	
112 920* 112 920*			Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
113 1,840* 113 1,840*			Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
115 110 215 55			Extension for reply within first month	
116 390 216 195			Extension for reply within second month	
117 890 217 445			Extension for reply within third month	
118 1,390 218 695			Extension for reply within fourth month	
128 1,890 228 945			Extension for reply within fifth month	
119 310 219 155			Notice of Appeal	
120 310 220 155			Filing a brief in support of an appeal	
121 270 221 135			Request for oral hearing	
138 1,510 138 1,510			Petition to institute a public use proceeding	
140 110 240 55			Petition to revive - uncodable	
141 1,240 241 620			Petition to revive - unintentional	
142 1,240 242 620			Utility issue fee (or reissue)	
143 440 243 220			Design issue fee	
144 600 244 300			Plant issue fee	
122 130 222 130			Petitions to the Commissioner	
123 50 123 50			Petitions related to provisional applications	
126 240 126 240			Submission of Information Disclosure Sheet	
581 40 581 40			Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	40.00
146 710 246 355			Filing a submission after final rejection (37 CFR 1.129(a))	
149 710 249 355			For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR § 1.129(b))	
179 710 279 355			Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	
169 900 169 900			Request for expedited examination of a design application	
Other fee (specify) _____				
SUBTOTAL (3) (\$)			40.00	

* Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBMITTED BY		Complete (if applicable)	
Name (Print/Type)	Gregory Scott Smith	Registration. No. (Attorney/Agent)	40,819 Telephone 404-885-3354
Signature		Date	11/08/00

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000011-8600260

**STATEMENT CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS
(37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(e)) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN**Docket Number (Optional)
6544.099642 (ACC3)Applicant, Patentee, or Identifier: Even et al.Application or Patent No.: Not yet assignedFiled or Issued: November 8, 2000Title A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ONE OR MORE MULTIPOINT
CONTROL UNITS AS ONE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNIT

I hereby state that I am

- ☐ the owner of the small business concern identified below:
- ☒ an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below:

NAME OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN Accord Networks, Inc.ADDRESS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN 10 Martin Gehl Street, Box 3654, Petach-Tikva, Israel
49130

I hereby state that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR Part 121 for purposes of paying reduced fees to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Questions related to size standards for a small business concern may be directed to: Small Business Administration, Size Standards Staff, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416.

- ☒ the application filed herewith with title as listed above,
- ☐ the application identified above.
- ☐ the patent identified above.

If the rights held by the above identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern, or organization having rights in the invention must file separate statements as to their status as small entities, and no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who would not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person made the invention, or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d), or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).

- Each person, concern, or organization having any rights in the invention is listed below:
- ☒ no such person, concern, or organization exists.
- ☐ each such person, concern, or organization is listed below.

Separate statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention stating their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27)

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b)).

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING 5161 GAVISHTITLE OF PERSON IF OTHER THAN OWNER CTOADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING 14 KISUFIM STR. TEL-AVIV ISRAELSIGNATURE [Signature] DATE OCT 31, 2000

A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ONE OR MORE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNITS AS ONE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNIT

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 This invention relates generally to multimedia communication, and more specifically, to a system and method for controlling multiple multimedia communication systems from a single control point.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 As the geographical domain in which companies conduct business continues to expand, video teleconferencing technology attempts to bring the world closer together. However, to fully satisfy the requirement of having a face to face meeting, it is necessary for the video conferencing technology to provide real-time, multipoint conferencing that is a pleasure
15 to utilize. However, in multipoint video conferencing, one main obstacle is the inefficiency of scheduling conferences.

 In the current market, most multipoint video calls are scheduled in advance through companies that own Multipoint Control Units (MCUs). An MCU provides the capability for three or more terminals and gateways
20 to participate in a multipoint conference. If a company owns more than one MCU, it has more flexibility in hosting video conferences. However, each MCU must be operated independently from the other MCUs in setting up and controlling video conferences. Additionally, the capacity of each MCU is limited to video conferences controlled by that MCU. The resources of
25 the multiple MCUs cannot be combined to promote more efficient scheduling.

 Each MCU is able to communicate with multiple conference

participants. In an exemplary system, the MCU has ten participant slots, and thus can support ten users. The MCU may be configured so that more than one conference is going on at one time. For instance, a four participant conference and a five participant conference can be simultaneously supported on an MCU with a capacity of ten participants. Due to inefficient scheduling, many MCUs have extra capacity that cannot be used. In the example above, the MCU has capacity for ten participants but only nine participants are scheduled for conferences.

One reason why most multipoint video calls are scheduled in advance is that there is a low probability of successfully finding an open MCU quickly without prior scheduling. This probability is low largely because a conference scheduler must contact each MCU separately to attempt to initiate a video conference. If a large number of MCUs could be contacted simultaneously, the probability of finding an available MCU quickly and initiating an unscheduled video conference would be greatly increased. Additionally, if an MCU could share its excess capacity with another MCU, more conferences could be accommodated. The availability of this feature would facilitate escaping the bonds of scheduled video conferences and allowing impromptu video conferences to abound.

Therefore, it is evident that there is a need in the art for a system and method for operating multiple MCUs from a single control point. This will reduce the burden on any single MCU and allow greater ease in initiating a video conference.

Therefore, it is also evident that there is a need in the art for a system and method for operating multiple MCUs from a single control point to schedule conferences on multiple MCUs in such a way as to minimize the number of unused participant slots on each MCU.

Therefore, it is also evident that there is a need in the art for a system and method for operating multiple MCUs from a single control point

in a manner that will allow video conference initiation without the need for prior scheduling.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention overcomes the above-described problems in the prior art by providing a single, apparatus that is capable of controlling a plurality of multipoint control units. This promotes efficient use of all of the MCUs because they are controlled and scheduled from a single point. Additionally, by combining the
10 MCUs and controlling them from a single point, the probability of successfully scheduling an impromptu video conference is greatly increased.

 The MCUs are interconnected to a common controlling Virtual MCU (VMCU). This VMCU controls all of the connected
15 MCUs and is used to schedule and coordinate video conferences on all of these MCUs. The VMCU can be a separate unit or one of the MCUs.

 In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU is able to identify reservation factors for each conference
20 to be scheduled. The reservation factors may include, but are not limited to, start time, duration of the conference, number of participants, protocol type, bit rate, and terminal type.

 In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU is able to identify capability factors for each of the
25 multimedia terminals and each of the corresponding MCUs. The capability factors for the multimedia terminals include, but are not limited to, the type of terminal, the supported Codecs, and the speed of the terminal. The capability factors for the corresponding MCUs include, but are not limited to, the number of participants that can be

included in conferences, the terminal types that can be supported and the speed of the MCU, the number of free audio bridges, the number of free Codecs, and the number of free video mixers. The number of free audio bridges and free video mixers refer to remaining capacity that each MCU has with respect to audio and video capabilities. Each MCU can either initiate or receive a call. The MCUs are responsive to a command from a multimedia terminal to initiate a multimedia communication between at least two of the multimedia terminals.

The VMCU can compare the capability factors for each of the multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the corresponding MCUs connected to the VMCU to determine an optimum assignment of resources for a video conference. The VMCU will be alerted when the time to start the conference has arrived. Upon being alerted that the time to start the conference has arrived, the VMCU rechecks the resources of the MCUs, compares them to the needs of the conference. The VMCU may change the assigned MCU at the last minute before the conference starts. The VMCU may either direct communication between the terminals and the MCU throughout a conference, or it can transfer the terminal to the MCU and allow the terminal and the MCU to communicate without interaction through the VMCU.

Other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description of the embodiments of the invention, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a system diagram that illustrates an exemplary environment suitable for implementing various embodiments of the present invention.

5 Fig. 2 is a block diagram of the VMCU.

Fig. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the conference reservation phase.

10 Fig. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the conference start phase.

Fig. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the forwarding of a dial-in call from an H.320 terminal.

15 Fig. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention in response to a conference initiation from an H.321 terminal.

20 Fig. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention in response to a conference initiation from an H.323 terminal.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring now to the drawings, in which like numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views, exemplary embodiments of the present invention are described.

Fig. 1 is a system diagram that illustrates an exemplary environment suitable for implementing various embodiments of the present invention. The system is controlled by a Virtual MCU (VMCU) (110) and may include one or more MCUs (135, 140, 145). Although three MCUs are illustrated, the present invention is not limited to a particular number of MCUs and the presented configuration is intended to be illustrative of an exemplary configuration. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) is implemented with an internal router unit, which is a part of the conference manager (250), for routing the conference participants to an MCU (135, 140, 145). In alternative embodiments of the present invention, the VMCU (110) may be implemented with an MCU or any hardware or software component capable of implementing the VMCU (110) functionality. An operator may control the VMCU (110) through a V-Manager (105). The V-Manager (105) may be any user operated computing device, such as a PC, Macintosh, mainframe computer, hand held devices such as a PALM® or Windows CE device, UNIX machine, or other similar device. In an exemplary embodiment, the VMCU (110) is coupled to each of the MCUs (135, 140, 145) through a TCP/IP connection. However, other communication connections may be used in alternative embodiments. The connection between the VMCU and the various MCUs may be an Intranet or Internet connection. The MCUs (135, 140, 145) may be co-located or geographically dispersed. In an exemplary system, each MCU (135, 140, 145)

supports connections with various types of terminals including, but not limited to H.321 (**155, 160**), H.323 (**190, 195, 198**) and H.320 (**175, 180, 185**) terminals. The connections to the terminals are illustrated as network clouds (**165, 170**). Those skilled in the art will appreciate that other terminal protocols could be used in alternative embodiments.

H.323 is a packet-based multimedia communications protocol. More information about communication protocols can be found at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) web site: <http://www.itu.int>. An H.323 terminal provides for real-time, two-way communications with another H.323 terminal (**190, 195, 198**), or an MCU (**135, 140, 145**). H.323 terminals support the communication of control, status, audio, moving color video pictures, and/or data. Depending on the scenario, an H.323 terminal (**190, 195, 198**) may provide speech only, speech and data, speech and video, or speech, data and video.

H.320 is a communication protocol that uses narrow-band visual telephone systems and terminal equipment. An H.321 terminal (**155, 160**) is an adaptation of an H.320 visual telephone terminals to a B-ISDN environment. The VMCU (**110**) can support various types of connectivity. Fig. 1 illustrates connecting through a switched network (**165**), an Intelligent Network (IN) (**130**), an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) network (**150**) and/or a LAN/Internet (**120, 170**) networks **120** and **170** can be the same network. Network **120/170** may be connected via a gateway (**189**) to a switched network (**165**) and may be connected via a gateway (**194**) to an ATM network (**150**). Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the VMCU (**110**) may be connected to an MCU (**135, 140, 145**)

through the aforementioned methods or any other connection that supports the transmission requirements of the MCUs.

A circuit switched network or switched network is a network in which a physical path is obtained for and dedicated to a single connection between two endpoints in the network for the duration of the connection. Endpoints include all network elements that can generate or terminate information streams. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, endpoints include, but are not limited to, telephones, terminals, gateways, MCUs, and VMCUs. Ordinary telephone service is circuit-switched.

An IN (130) is a telephone network architecture originated by Bell Communications Research in which the service logic for a call is located separately from the switching facilities, allowing services to be added or changed without having to redesign switching equipment.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) system supports a TCP connection to the MCUs (135, 140, 145). It may include an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) Primary Rate Interface (PRI) module and another LAN (120, 170) connection to the IN (130).

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) communicates over a LAN/Internet (120, 170), through a gatekeeper (125). The gatekeeper (125) is an H.323 entity on the network that provides address translation and controls access to the network for H.323 terminals (190, 195, 198), H.323 Gateways (189, 194) and MCUs (135, 140, 145). The Gatekeeper (125) may also provide other services to the terminals, Gateways, and MCUs such as bandwidth management and address resolution for Gateways.

An H.323 Gateway (**189, 194**) provides for real-time, two-way communications between H.323 Terminals (**190, 195, 198**) on the packet-based network, other Terminals on a switched circuit network (**165**), or to another H.323 Gateway (**189, 194**). Other

5 Terminals include those complying with ITU recommendations, such as H.310 (H.320 on B-ISDN), H.320 (ISDN), H.321 (ATM), H.322 (GQOS-LAN), H.324 (GSTN), H.324M (Mobile), and V.70 (DSVD).

The VMCU (**110**) may either control all of the VMCU (**110**) functions described herein, or it may use an external

10 management system (**115**) to control various functions of the VMCU (**110**). In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, an external management system (**115**) may be used to operate the reservation system associated with the VMCU (**110**).

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of the VMCU (**110**). The

15 VMCU (**110**) is a platform independent system solution for controlling one or more MCUs (**135, 140, 145**). The VMCU may be one of the MCUs (**135, 140, 145**). In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (**110**) includes several modules that use a shared database (**265**). The modules include, but are not limited

20 to, the conference reservation manager (**235**), the conference manager (**250**), the resource allocation manager (**245**), the event manager (**255**), the reports manager (**240**), the system administrator tool (**230**), and the VMCU databases (**265**).

The Conference Reservation Manager (**235**) accepts

25 requests for visual session reservations and uses the reservation parameters to verify that it can be accepted. The Conference Reservation Manager (**235**) then stores the reservation record in the database (**265**). If the session has to start immediately, the

Conference Reservation Manager (235) passes the information to the Conference Manager (250).

The Conference Manager (250) starts a session when the session's time to start arrives. The Conference Manager (250) loads the session onto the target MCU via the MCU API (260) and gets status information from all of the MCUs concerning ongoing sessions. The Conference Manager (250) can accept requests for dial-in conferences and route the requests to the correct MCU or accept Intelligent Network (IN) requests for routing information. The Conference Manager (250) may route H.323 calls by forwarding H.225 and H.245 messages to the selected MCU or gatekeeper or by serving as a termination point for a call.

The Resource Allocation Manager (245) keeps the information concerning the MCUs' resources, i.e. audio bridges, video mixers, etc., and allocates the resources to conferences. The Resource Allocation Manager (245) also calculates resource availability for future reservations.

The Event Manager (255) receives messages, such as call start, call terminate, etc, for the different MCUs and stores the messages in a database (265).

The Reporting Manager (240) builds reports. The reports may include, but are not limited to, length of time resources were used, which resources were used for a specific session, and percentage of resources used during a specified time period. The reports are built upon the receipt of a report request from the Internet server (220).

The System Administrator (230) serves as an input tool for VMCU parameters. The VMCU parameter may include, but are

not limited to, the number of MCUs controlled by the VMCU, the MCU addresses, and the MCUs' resources.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU databases (265) include databases for reservations, users, and any other data required for the operation of the VMCU (110). Database (265) can be an external Database including, but not limited to, a Database using LDAP or ILS. A virtual API (225) enables clients to do one or more of the following tasks: reserve conferences, start an impromptu conference, control on going conferences, and receive usage information. The aforementioned tasks may be completed from a standard web browser (210). The browser (210) interacts with an Internet server (220) that uses the virtual API (225).

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) offers users a web based tool enabling a user leading a conference to connect to the VMCU (110) and monitor and control the conference remotely. The VMCU (110) works as a proxy for the user by getting the information and sending controls to the actual MCU (135, 140, 145) supporting the conference. The end user does not have to know which MCU (135, 140, 145) is supporting the conference.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a VMCU (110) communicates with MCUs (135, 140, 145) through an MCU application program interface (MCU API) (260).

An exemplary embodiment of the present invention can operate within a four-phased video conference system. The four phases include: Configuration, Conference reservation, Conference scheduling, and Conference Control.

During the configuration phase, an operator enters configuration information for the MCUs (135, 140, 145) into the

VMCU (110). Completing the configuration enables the VMCU (110) to verify and allocate resources for the conference during the reservation and scheduling phases.

The Conference reservation, Conference scheduling, and Conference Control phases will be discussed in conjunction with the following figures.

Fig. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the conference reservation phase. The conference reservation phase is entered when a user wishes to reserve a conference. In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the conference may include H.320, H.323, and H.321 terminals. Initially, the VMCU (110) receives a conference reservation request (305). The conference reservation request includes information to allow the VMCU (110) to determine whether the resources necessary to support the requested conference are available (310). The resources necessary for the conference include the availability of MCU support for each conference participant. Each MCU supporting the conference must be able to communicate with the terminal to be supported by that MCU during the video conference. If there are insufficient resources available to support the requested conference, the reservation is temporarily suspended. If additional resources are obtained subsequent to the temporary suspension (i.e. another conference is canceled), then the VMCU (110) may notify the participants that the conference can now be scheduled (315).

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) is able to identify reservation factors for each conference to be scheduled. The reservation factors may include, but

are not limited to, start time, duration of the conference, number of participants, protocol type, bit rate, and terminal type.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the VMCU (110) is able to identify capability factors for each of the multimedia terminals (155, 160, 175, 180, 185, 190, 195, 198) and each of the corresponding MCUs (135, 140, 145). The capability factors for the multimedia terminals (155, 160, 175, 180, 185, 190, 195, 198) include the type of terminal, codec type, and the speed of the terminal. The capability factors for the corresponding MCUs (135, 140, 145) include the number of participants that can be included in conferences, the terminal types that can be supported and the speed of the MCU (135, 140, 145), the number of free audio bridges, and the number of free video mixers. The number of free audio bridges and free video mixers refer to remaining capacity that each MCU (135, 140, 145) has with respect to audio and video capabilities. Each MCU (135, 140, 145) can either initiate or receive a call. The MCUs (135, 140, 145) are responsive to a command from a multimedia terminal to initiate a multimedia communication between at least two of the multimedia terminals (155, 160, 175, 180, 185, 190, 195, 198).

If the Conference Reservation Manager (235) of the VMCU (110) determines that there are enough resources available to host the conference (310), processing then continues at step 320. At step 320, the VMCU (110) determines how the participants will connect to the conference when it is time to start the conference. There are several conference connection options including: dial-in, dial-out, and network connection. In the dial-in connection option, the participants dial an assigned number associated with the MCU (135, 140, 145) assigned to host the conference and/or a conference

Alias. In the dial-out connection option, the MCU (135, 140, 145) assigned to host the conference dials each of the participants. In the network connection option, both the participants and the MCU (135, 140, 145) are connected to a network and they communicate through that network. The network can be any type of network including LAN, Internet, Intranet, or other networks. The conference can also be initiated by all parties contacting the VMCU (110) and the VMCU (110) will handle communications.

At step 320, if the conference is a dial-out conference, the VMCU (110) records the telephone number of the participant so that the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) can initiate a call to the participant at the scheduled start time for the conference. Alternatively, the VMCU (110) can initiate a call to each participant and control the communication between the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) and the participants. If the conference is a dial-in conference type (320), the VMCU (110) assigns a dial-in number to the participant (325) and notifies the participant of the assigned number. This dial-in number is usually the dial-in number for the MCU (135, 140, 145) reserved for the conference. Alternatively, the VMCU (110) may assign a number to dial-in to the VMCU (110), or a different MCU (135, 140, 145), and then forward the call to the correct MCU (135, 140, 145) when the conference starts. H.320 terminals (175, 180, 185) will use this number to dial into the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145). Additionally, the conference may be scheduled over an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) line or over a computer network. In these cases, the participants will connect to the conference over the ISDN lines. The ISDN number will point to one of the preferred MCU's (135, 140, 145) for the conference. It may optionally be a special number in cases where the system

supports IN (130) connectivity. The number will be used as an E.164 alias by the H.323 terminals (190, 195, 198) to call through a gatekeeper (125). The ISDN number will be translated to the correct ATM (150) number during call setup in an H.321 terminal (155, 160).

5 After the VMCU (110) has determined that there are sufficient resources available to host the conference and the reservation has been approved, the VMCU (110) stores the reservation date, reservation time, participant names, dial-in numbers, the MCU(s) (135, 140, 145) assigned, and any other applicable
10 information into a reservation database (330) (265). This reservation database (265) is available to the VMCU (110) to set-up the conference when the start time arrives. The reservation database may also be accessed if the VMCU (110) needs to change the information, such as assigning a different MCU (135, 140, 145) in order to create a
15 more efficient schedule. Such a modification to the reservation database may be necessary when multiple conferences can be combined on MCUs (135, 140, 145) to minimize the number of unused participant slots during a conference. For instance, if a six participant conference is scheduled on an MCU (135, 140, 145) with
20 ten participant slots and a four participant conference is scheduled on a different MCU (135, 140, 145), then these two conferences can be moved to a single MCU (135, 140, 145) with ten participant slots and all of the participant slots will be used. Thus this aspect of the present invention optimizes the efficiency in the use and scheduling of
25 conference resources.

Additionally, the VMCU (110) may be configured to allow a single conference to be initiated across multiple MCUs (135, 140, 145). When the VMCU (110) operates in this manner, not all

participants will be connected to the same MCU (135, 140, 145), but they will all be able to communicate with each other as the various MCUs (135, 140, 145) are cascaded by the VMCU (110). This aspect of the present invention allows a greater number of participant slots on each MCU (135, 140, 145) to be scheduled. This aspect further allows for the support of large conferences that include more participants than a single MCU (135, 140, 145) can accommodate. More particularly, this aspect of the present invention allows the VMCU (110) to operate as a single MCU (135, 140, 145) that is as large as the sum of all of the available participant slots on all of the connected MCUs (135, 140, 145). Typically, this aspect of the present invention is only used after conferences have been efficiently combined on the available MCUs (135, 140, 145) and the remaining capacity of the MCUs (135, 140, 145) is insufficient to support an additional conference.

When the VMCU (110) receives multiple conference requests, the VMCU (110) determines how to assign the conferences to the available MCUs (135, 140, 145). For instance, the VMCU (110) receives three conference requests for conferences requiring resources for conferences of sizes A, B, and C, where A, B, and C represent the number of participant slots needed by each conference. If two MCUs are available and the two MCUs have X participant slots, and if A plus B is greater than X, and B plus C is less than or equal to X, then the VMCU (110) assigns the conference of size A to a first MCU and the conferences of sizes B and C to a second MCU. If two MCUs are available and the two MCUs have X participant slots, and if A plus B is greater than X, A plus C is greater than X, and B plus C is greater than X, then the VMCU (110) assigns the conference of size A to a first MCU, the conferences of size B to a

second MCU and assigns the conference of size C to a VMCU (110), wherein the VMCU (110) controls the remaining participant slots on the first and second MCUs as an additional MCU.

In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention,
5 the VMCU (110) first optimizes the conference scheduling by combining conferences together onto a single MCU (135, 140, 145). After the MCUs (135, 140, 145) are scheduled as fully as possible, the VMCU (110) schedules the remaining MCU resources to conference participants as if the remaining resources comprised an additional
10 MCU (135, 140, 145). These remaining resources are then cascaded by the VMCU (110).

Fig. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the conference start phase. Initially, the Conference Manager (250) of the
15 VMCU (110) is alerted when the time to start the reserved conference has arrived (405). The VMCU (110) will next assign the conference to an MCU by selecting an MCU (135, 140, 145) that has sufficient resources to run the conference (410). The selected MCU may be the same MCU that was reserved for the conference or it can be a
20 different MCU. After the VMCU (110) selects an MCU to run the conference, the VMCU (110) provides the MCU with the necessary instructions to run the conference (412). These instructions include information concerning how each participant will connect to the conference and any other information necessary for the MCU to run
25 the conference.

If the conference is a dial-in conference, the VMCU (110) then either signals the MCU (135, 140, 145) corresponding to the dial-in number assigned to the conference to accept the

conference, or the VMCU (110) provides the MCU (135, 140, 145) with a number to forward the call to if the VMCU (110) decides to run the conference on another MCU (135, 140, 145). If the conference is a dial-out conference, the VMCU (110) will notify the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) which numbers it should dial to contact the desired participants. If the conference is a dial-in conference and the conference has been moved to a different MCU (135, 140, 145), the VMCU (110) may either direct the reserved MCU (135, 140, 145) to notify the participants of the new dial-in number, or if the MCU (135, 140, 145) is connected to an ISDN network that has a call forwarding service, the MCU (135, 140, 145) may be used to forward the call. If call forwarding is used, the VMCU (110) will send a call forward request to the local exchange serving calls to the MCU (135, 140, 145). Call forwarding on an ISDN line can be signaled during the call setup, or before the call, by providing a special code to the exchange. The special code identifies the number to which to forward the call. For H.323 conferences, the VMCU (110) will register the H.323 conference alias on the gatekeeper (125). For H.321 conferences, the VMCU (110) will register the H.321 ATM numbers with the ATM (150). In the case of an IN (130) based solution, the VMCU (110) will notify the IN (130) of the real destination number associated with the allocated dial-in number.

After the conference has been assigned to an MCU (410), the VMCU (110) will get the first participant for the conference (415). If the participant is not a dial-in participant (420), the VMCU (110) will provide the dial-out number to the assigned MCU to enable the assigned MCU to initiate a call to the participant. The dial-out number is available from the reservation database as recorded during the conference reservation phase. If the participant is a dial-in

participant (420), the next action of the VMCU (110) will depend upon what type of terminal is being used. If the dial-in terminal is an H.320 terminal (425), processing continues at step 505 of Fig. 5. If the dial-in terminal is an H.321 terminal (430), processing continues at step 605 of Fig. 6. If the dial-in terminal is an H.323 terminal (435), processing continues at step 705 of Fig. 7.

In addition to the dial-in and dial-out options described above, the participant may connect to the conference by directly dialing the VMCU (110). If the participant dials the VMCU (110) directly, the call will either be forwarded to the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) as described in Fig. 5, or the VMCU (110) will handle communications with the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) through the network connecting the VMCU (110) to the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145). After the first participant is secured for the conference, the VMCU (110) will repeat the process for each additional participant.

Fig. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during the forwarding of a dial-in call from an H.320 terminal. After the VMCU (110) determines that the participant is a dial-in participant using an H.320 terminal (175, 180, 185), the VMCU (110) must determine how the terminal (175, 180, 185) will connect to the desired MCU (135, 140, 145). If the H.320 terminal (175, 180, 185) is currently assigned to the MCU (135, 140, 145) reserved for the conference (505), then that participant is ready to start the conference and the next participant can be processed. If the H.320 terminal is not assigned to the correct MCU (135, 140, 145)(505), then the VMCU (110) must get the dial-in number (510) for the correct MCU. Once the dial-in number is called, the VMCU (110) forwards the call to the

correct MCU (135, 140, 145) (515). Additionally, the VMCU (110) may handle communications with the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145) through the network connecting the VMCU (110) to the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145).

Fig. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention in response to a conference initiation from an H.321 terminal. After the VMCU (110) determines that the participant is a dial-in participant using an H.321 terminal (155, 160), the VMCU (110) must determine how the terminal (155, 160) will connect to the conference. If the H.321 terminal (155, 160) is currently assigned to the MCU (135, 140, 145) reserved for the conference (605), then that participant is ready to start the conference and the next participant can be processed. If the participant is not assigned to the correct MCU (135, 140, 145)(605), then the system must get the ATM dial-in number (610). If an ISDN number has been assigned to the conference by the VMCU (110), it will be translated to the correct ATM number during call setup in an H.321 terminal (155, 160) (615).

Fig. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating the steps involved in an exemplary embodiment of the present invention during a conference initiation process from an H.323 terminal. After the VMCU (110) determines that the participant is a dial-in participant using an H.323 terminal (190, 195, 198), the VMCU (110) will register the conference alias at the gatekeeper (705). Once the alias is registered at the gatekeeper, the H.323 terminal can communicate with the assigned MCU (135, 140, 145). The Alias assigned by the VMCU (110) during the conference scheduling phase will point to one of the preferred MCUs (135, 140, 145) for the conference. The

number may optionally be a special number in cases where the system supports IN (130) connectivity. The number will be used as an E.164 alias by the H.323 terminals (190, 195, 198) to call through a gatekeeper.

5

CONCLUSION

The present invention provides the ability to schedule and initiate a conference, or other event, through a VMCU. The VMCU is designed to accept reservations and schedule conferences for a multitude of MCUs. This enables the VMCU to schedule the conferences in an efficient manner and to maximize the number of conferences scheduled at any particular time. The present invention has been described in relation to particular embodiments, which are intended in all respects to be illustrative rather than restrictive. Those skilled in the art will understand that the principles of the present invention may be applied to, and embodied in, various program modules for execution on differing types of computers and/or equipment, operating in differing types of networks, regardless of the application.

Alternate embodiments will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which the present invention pertains without departing from its spirit and scope. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention is described by the appended claims and supported by the foregoing description.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for multimedia communication,
comprising the steps of:

5 communicatively interconnecting a plurality of
multimedia terminals to a plurality of corresponding multipoint
control units;

 communicatively interconnecting the plurality of
corresponding multipoint control units to a central controller;

10 identifying capability factors for each of the
plurality of multimedia terminals and each of the plurality of
corresponding multipoint control units;

 responsive to a command to initiate a multimedia
communication between at least two of the plurality of multimedia
15 terminals, evaluating the capability factors for each of the at least two
multimedia terminals;

 comparing the capability factors for each of the at
least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the
multipoint control units communicatively interconnected to the
20 central controller to determine a preferred interconnection between
the at least two multimedia terminals; and

 responsive to the comparing of capability factors,
the central controller directing a communicative interconnection
between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least one of the
25 plurality of multipoint control units.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the capability factors
include identification factors, matching factors, and routing factors.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the identification factors include information relating to the identity, needs, requirements, and participation authority of the plurality of multimedia terminals.

5 4. The method of Claim 2, wherein the matching factors include information relating to the capacity and technological orientation of each of the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units.

10 5. The method of Claim 2, wherein the routing factors include information relating to the most expeditious route for effecting the communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals and the corresponding multipoint control unit.

15 6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 allocating conferences on multipoint control units such that the number of conferences that can be scheduled on a conference schedule is optimized.

20 7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the conference schedule is optimized by combining conferences on a multipoint control unit so as to maximize the number of participants on the multipoint control unit.

 8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 controlling multipoint control unit participant slots with the virtual multipoint control unit.

25 9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit controls the multipoint control unit participant slots as if it were an additional multipoint control unit.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein the multipoint control unit participant slots are participant slots remaining after the multipoint control unit is optimally scheduled.

5 11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when the start time for a conference arrives.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when a participant requests an impromptu multimedia communication.

10 13. A system for multimedia communication, comprising:

a plurality of multimedia terminals;
a plurality of multipoint control units in communication with the plurality of multimedia terminals; and
15 a virtual multipoint control unit communicatively interconnected to the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units for controlling the plurality of multipoint control units from a single location.

20 14. The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.320 terminal.

15 15. The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.323 terminal.

16. The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.321 terminal.

25 17. The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals include a combination of H.320, H.321, and H.323 systems.

18. The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ATM network.

19. The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over a LAN/Internet network.

20. The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ISDN network.

21. The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of communicating with terminals of various standards.

22. The system of Claim 21, wherein the terminals are compatible with the H.320, H.321, and H.323 standards.

23. The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit in communication with the at least two multipoint control units is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference including terminals connected to at least two of the at least two multipoint control units.

24. The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is one of the plurality of multipoint control units.

25. A system for virtual multimedia communication, comprising:

a conference reservation manager for making conference reservations;

a conference manager for managing the conference;

a system administration tool for
administering the system; and

a virtual API to allow the user to reserve
conferences, control on going conferences, and receive usage
5 information.

26. A master control unit for controlling the operation of
at least one multipoint control unit, the multipoint control units being
operable to provide conferencing for multiple terminals, the control
unit comprising:

10 a multipoint control unit interface for
controlling the operation and resource allocation of the at least one
multipoint control unit; and

a database for recording conference
reservations and conference participants;

15 whereby, the master control unit can
schedule conferences in an efficient manner by allocating the
resources of the at least one multipoint control unit in an optimal
fashion.

27. The master control unit of Claim 26, further
20 comprising:

a reporting manager for reporting the status
of a conference.

28. The master control unit of Claim 26, further
comprising:

25 an event manager for managing the
initiation of conferences.

29. The master control unit of Claim 26, further comprising:

a conference reservation manager for making conference reservations.

5 30. The master control unit of Claim 26, further comprising:

a conference manager for managing a conference by directing participants to a selected multipoint control unit to engage in a conference.

10 31. The master control unit of Claim 26, further comprising:

a conference reservation manager for making conference reservations by assigning a particular multipoint control unit to a conference; and

15 a conference manager for managing a conference by directing participants to a selected multipoint control unit to engage in a conference, the selected multipoint control unit being selected from a group of multipoint control units consisting of the particular multipoint control unit and an alternate available
20 multipoint control unit.

32. The master control unit of Claim 31, wherein the conference manager directs the participants to the selected multipoint control unit by providing to the particular multipoint control unit a number to which to forward a call if an alternate available multipoint
25 control unit is selected as the selected multipoint control unit.

33. The master control unit of Claim 26, further comprising:

a system administration tool for
administering the system by directing communication between
endpoints in communication with a virtual multipoint control unit.

34. The master control unit of Claim 26, wherein each of
the at least one multipoint control units can support X participant slots
in one or more conferences, further comprising:

a resource allocation manager for allocating
resources for conferences;

wherein the resources are allocated by
assigning conferences to a multipoint control unit so that optimal use
of the at least one multipoint control units can be obtained.

35. The master control unit of Claim 34, wherein the
resources are allocated among the at least one multipoint control units
as follows:

receiving a first request for a first
conference, the first conference requiring support for A participants;

receiving a second request for a second
conference, the second conference requiring support for B
participants;

receiving a third request for a third
conference, the third conference requiring support for C participants;

wherein the sum of A and B is greater than
X and the sum of B and C is less or equal to X, assigning the first
conference to a first multipoint control unit and assigning the second
conference and third conference to a second multipoint control unit.

36. The master control unit of Claim 34, wherein the resources are allocated among the at least one multipoint control units as follows:

receiving a first request for a first
5 conference, the first conference requiring support for A participants;

receiving a second request for a second
conference, the second conference requiring support for B
participants;

receiving a third request for a third
10 conference, the third conference requiring support for C participants;

wherein the sum of A and B is greater than
X, the sum of A and C is greater than X, and the sum of B and C is
greater than X, assigning the first conference to a first multipoint
control unit, assigning the second conference to a second multipoint
15 control unit, and assigning the third conference to a virtual multipoint
control unit, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit controls the
remaining participant slots on the first and second multipoint control
units as an additional multipoint control unit.

37. A multimedia conference system for making a
20 plurality of multimedia conferences between pluralities of terminals
via selected one or more multipoint control units, comprising:

a virtual multipoint control unit;

a plurality of multipoint control units;

a plurality of terminals;

25 means for connecting at least one of the
plurality of terminals with at least one of the multipoint control units;

means for connecting at least one of the terminals with the virtual multipoint control unit; and

the virtual multipoint control unit receiving a command to initiate a multimedia conference between at least two
5 of the plurality of terminals, assigning a conference to at least one selected multipoint control unit of the plurality of multipoint control units, and routing the participant terminals to the selected multipoint control unit.

38. The system of Claim 37, wherein the virtual
10 multipoint control unit is one of the multipoint control units.

39. The system of Claim 37, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit consists of an external router unit.

40. The system of Claim 37, wherein the means for connecting the virtual multipoint control unit and the multipoint
15 control unit includes connection selected from a group consisting of: direct connection, TCT/IP Intranet connection, and TCP/IP Internet connection.

41. The system of Claim 37, wherein the means for connecting at least one of the plurality of terminals with the virtual
20 multipoint control unit includes connection selected from a group consisting of: direct connection, LAN, ATM network, Switched network, Intelligent Network, and Internet.

42. The system of Claim 37, wherein the means for connecting at least one of the plurality of terminals with at least one
25 of the multipoint control units includes connection selected from a group consisting of: direct connection, LAN, ATM network, Switched network, Intelligent Network, and Internet.

43. The system of Claim 37, wherein the connection of at least one of the plurality of terminals with the virtual multipoint control unit is using a communication protocol selected from a group consisting of: direct connection, H.320, H.321, and H.323.

5 44. The system of Claim 37, wherein the connection of at least one of the plurality of terminals with at least one of the multipoint control units is using a communication protocol selected from a group consisting of: direct connection, H.320, H.321, and H.323.

10 45. The system of Claim 37, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit comprises a reservation module that will:

accept a request for a multimedia conference;

get conference parameters;

15 review the capability factors of the group of multipoint control units;

verify that the request can be accepted;

if it is accepted, notify the relevant modules inside the virtual multipoint control unit of the conference parameters,

20 and return an approval of the request; and

if it is not accepted, reject the request.

46. The system of Claim 45, wherein the reservation factors include at least one factor selected from a group consisting of: start time, duration, number of participants, protocol type, bit rate,

25 and terminal type.

47. The system of Claim 45, wherein the capability factors of the group of multipoint control units includes at least one factor selected from a group consisting of: a number of free audio bridges, and a number of free video mixers.

5 48. The system of Claim 45, wherein the approval for a conference request is a dial-in number.

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VIRTUAL MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNITS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A video teleconferencing system for controlling multiple
multipoint control units (MCU) from a single apparatus. The system
utilizes a Virtual MCU (VMCU) (110) to communicate with a
plurality of MCUs (135, 140, 145). A user initiates a reserve
conference command with the VMCU (110). If sufficient resources
10 are available, the reservation is made and connection numbers are
assigned. When the time for the conference arises, an MCU (135,
140, 145) is assigned to the conference. The participants are then
connected to the conference. By using a single VMCU (110) to
schedule and coordinate multiple MCUs (135, 140, 145), the present
15 invention is able to efficiently schedule a large number of
conferences. This greater efficiency in scheduling may allow users to
schedule conferences without the advance notice that is usually
required.

20

Attorney Docket: 006544-107870 (ACC3)

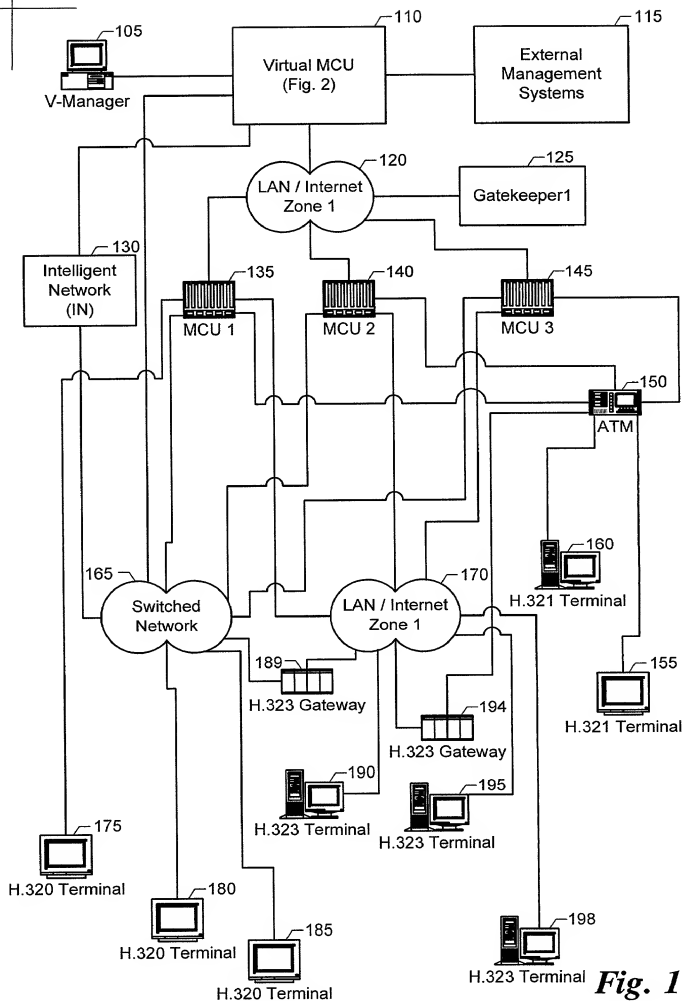


Fig. 1

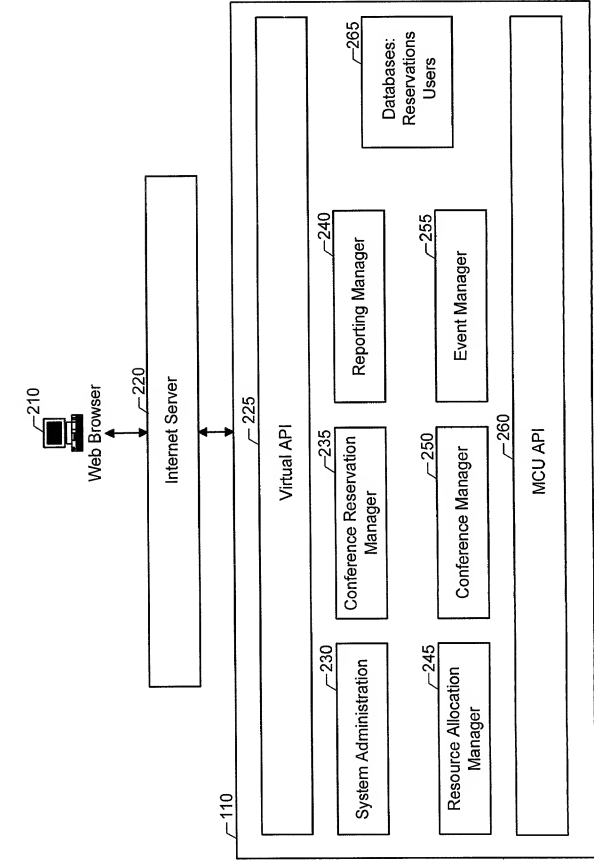


Fig. 2

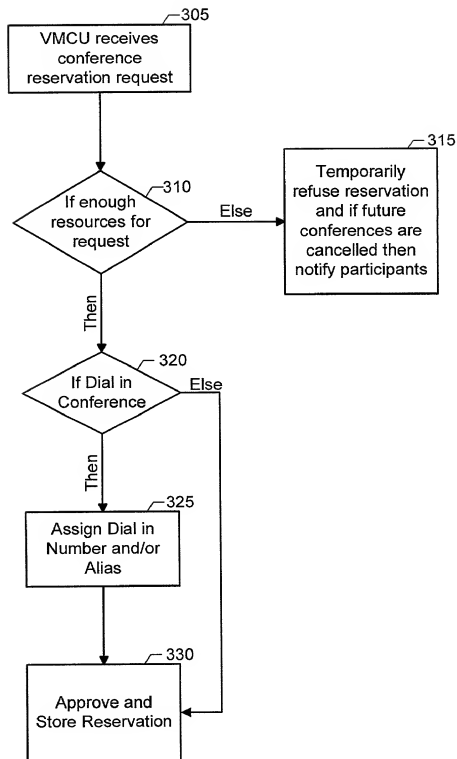


Fig. 3

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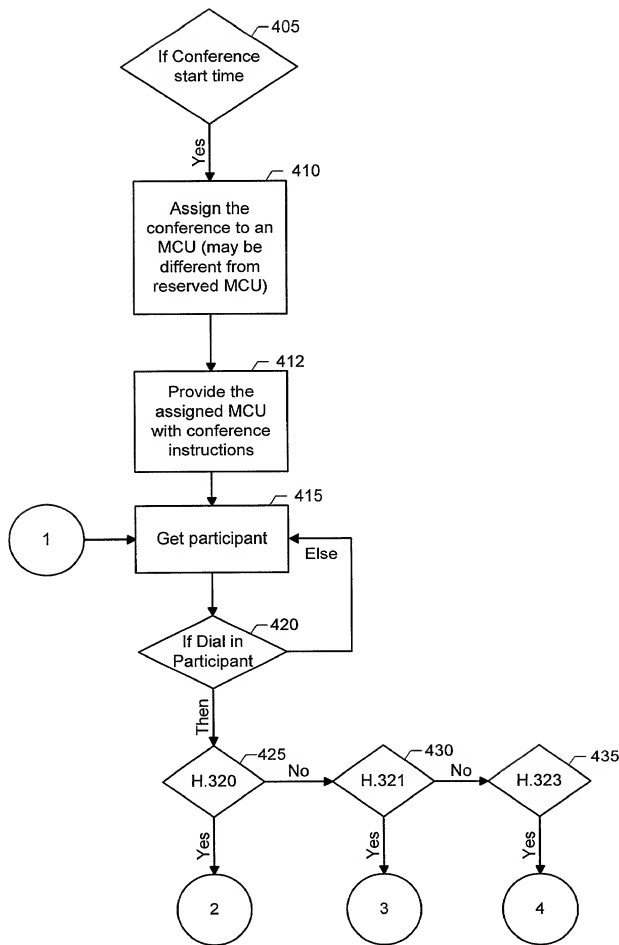


Fig. 4

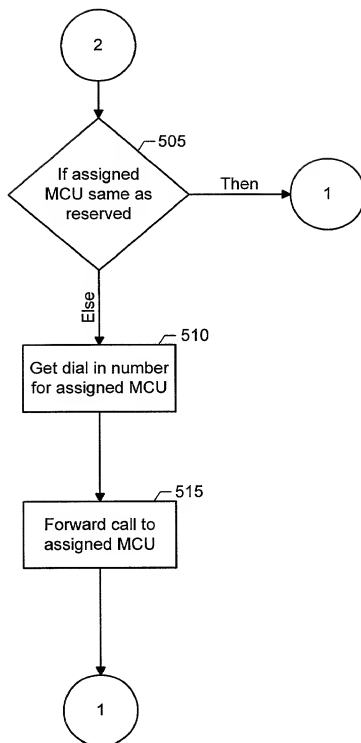


Fig. 5

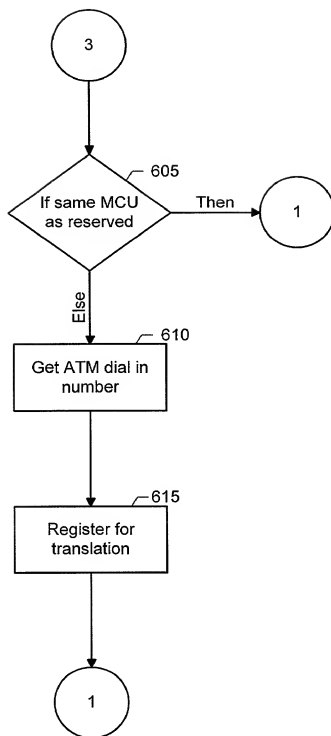


Fig. 6

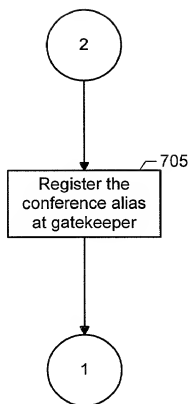


Fig. 7

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Attorney's Docket No. 6544.107870 (ACC3)

In Re Application: Roni Even, Sigmund Gavish and Itay Yad-Shalom

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name. I believe I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled: **A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ONE OR MORE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNITS AS ONE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNIT**, the specification of which:

☒ is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the same was ever known or used by others in the United States of America before our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to the date of this application. I further state that the invention was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to the date of this application. *I understand that I have a duty of candor and good faith toward the Patent and Trademark Office, and I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.*

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 (a)-(d) of the foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below, and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate disclosing subject matter in common with the above-identified specification and having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Application No.	Country	Filing Date	Priority Claimed Under 35 USC §119
None			Yes _____ No _____

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Serial No. 60/164,298 filed on November 8, 1999

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter disclosed and claimed in the present application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:


Application Serial No.	Filing Date	Status: patented, pending, abandoned
None		

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patents issuing thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: The following attorneys and/or agents are hereby appointed to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: GERALD R. BOSS, REG. NO. 36,460; R. STEVAN COURSEY, REG. NO. 39,949; TODD DEVEAU, REG. NO. 29,526; JOEL S. GOLDMAN, REG. NO. 29,070; W. BROOK LAFFERTY, REG. NO. 39,259; HAROLD L. MARQUIS, REG. NO. 20,594; RYAN A. SCHNEIDER, REG. NO. 45,083; GREGORY S. SMITH, REG. NO. 40,819; KENNETH SOUTHWALL, REG. NO. 38,315; CHARLES L. WARNER, REG. NO. 32,320; and ROGER S. WILLIAMS, REG. NO. P43,273.

Send correspondence to: **TROUTMAN SANDERS, LLP**
600 Peachtree Street, N.E., Suite 2500
Atlanta, Georgia 30308-2216

Direct telephone calls at (404) 885-3354 to:
Gregory Scott Smith

Full name of first inventor: Roni Even	Citizenship: ISRAEL
Inventor's signature 	Date: 10.31.00
Residence and Post Office Address: 14 David Hamelech Street, Tel Aviv ISRAEL	

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Attorney's Docket No. 6544.107870 (ACC3)

In Re Application: Roni Even, Sigmund Gavish and Itay Yad-Shalom

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name. I believe I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled: **A SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ONE OR MORE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNITS AS ONE MULTIPOINT CONTROL UNIT**, the specification of which:

☒ is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the same was ever known or used by others in the United States of America before our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to the date of this application. I further state that the invention was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to the date of this application. *I understand that I have a duty of candor and good faith toward the Patent and Trademark Office*, and I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 (a)-(d) of the foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below, and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate disclosing subject matter in common with the above-identified specification and having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>	<u>Priority Claimed Under 35 USC §119</u>
None			Yes _____ No _____

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Serial No. 60/164,298 filed on November 8, 1999

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter disclosed and claimed in the present application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:


<u>Application Serial No.</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>	<u>Status: patented, pending, abandoned</u>
None		

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patents issuing thereon.

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Direct telephone calls at (404) 885-3354 to:
Gregory Scott Smith

Full name of second inventor: Sigmund Gavish	Citizenship: ISRAEL
Inventor's signature 	Date: 11-3-00
Residence and Post Office Address: 14 Kisufim Street, Tel Aviv ISRAEL	

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DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Attorney's Docket No. 6544.107870 (ACC3)

In Re Application: Roni Even, Sigmund Gavish and Itay Yad-Shalom

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I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 (a)-(d) of the foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below, and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate disclosing subject matter in common with the above-identified specification and having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Application No.	Country	Filing Date	Priority Claimed Under 35 USC §119
None			Yes _____ No _____

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Serial No. 60/164,298 filed on November 8, 1999

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter disclosed and claimed in the present application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Application Serial No.	Filing Date	Status: patented, pending, abandoned
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I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patents issuing thereon.

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Gregory Scott Smith

Full name of third inventor: Itay Yad-Shalom	Citizenship: ISRAEL
Inventor's signature	Date: 11-3-00
Residence and Post Office Address: 15 Kehilat Warsaw Street, Tel Aviv ISRAEL	

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